



# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club \* Vol. 51\* Summer 2022*

## Heartland hopes for big turnout



Runners again will gather near the Missouri River for the eighth annual Heartland Marathon. More than 500 crossed the finish line at the 2021 event. Once more, participants can run the full marathon, half marathon or 10K. The popular marathon relay returns as well. (Photo by Justin Barnes Photography.)

### Heartland Marathon

**When:** Sept. 25

**Time:** 7 a.m.

**Where:** Riverfront Trail  
(north of Gallup)

**Register online at:**

[heartlandmarathon.org](http://heartlandmarathon.org)

**A**s summer transcends toward fall, organizers of the Heartland Marathon will be hoping for ideal weather and an even larger turnout for the event that will mark eight years of existence. Faced with more than a couple years of unfavorable conditions, the 2021 marathon was given a break by Mother Nature as more than 500 finished either the full marathon, half, marathon relay or 10K.

Tom Whitaker, race director and president of the ORC, is looking forward to adding more participants for the Sept. 25 event, which starts and finishes near the Missouri River south of the River City Star location.

"All we need is more runners," he said. "Hopefully, we will start getting more as the pandemic sort of ceases."

Race numbers appear to be declining, Whitaker said.

"Getting the runners back will be a challenge," he said, "but I think we can do it. We're doing a lot to publicize it."

He pointed out that the Des Moines and Lincoln Marathon numbers have dropped. At the same time, he's optimistic that the Heartland will continue to grow.

"We're hoping for 1,100 or 1,200 (participants) this year," Whitaker said, adding that if it gets too large, course changes likely will have to take place.

"The trail system won't hold that much more," he said, "especially with the two-loop course we have. But having too many runners would be a good problem to have."

### McMahon Meet numbers improve

Men and women of all ages turn out to participate in the fifth annual Jim McMahon Track Meet. **Page 2.**

### Peak's Run Happy Hour draws big crowd

The inaugural 2022 Peak Performance Run Happy Hour is a hit for area runners. **Page 3.**

# Ex-Husker stars at McMahon Meet

The fifth annual ORC Jim McMahon Open Track Meet took place on June 12 at Westside High School. The event honors former longtime Midland University cross country and track coach Jim McMahon. McMahon was one of the founding members of the Omaha Running Club in the 1970s.

“Each year the meet continues to grow which is great to see,” meet director Derek Fey said. “The McMahon family always supports it with their presence and by bringing down a bunch of Fremont people as well.”

Events on the track ranged from 100 meters to 5,000 meters. Participants also competed in the long jump, high jump, triple jump, discus, shot put and javelin. This year had twice as many registrants as the year before.



**Todd Nott and Angee Henry have been married for seven years.**

set. We'll be renting a wind gauge next year for sure.”

Henry's top effort, coming in her first McMahon meet competition, was nearly 5 feet longer than runner-up Tonya Gordon in the 40-and-over age group.

A star at Bellevue West High School before embarking on her superb NU career, Henry wanted to support Fey, who she coaches with at CSM.

“Derek is bringing track back in Omaha,” she said.

The 1996 NCAA national long-jump champion said it felt good to be competing.

“It's been a long time since I've jumped,” Henry said. “I was worried about my knee. I had knee surgery in 2000.”

Asked to reflect on her outstanding career as a Husker, she said the closeness of her teammates will always stand out in her mind.

This year's edition saw several outstanding performances, including an American record for the women's master's division long jump. Well, almost. Angee Henry, former University of Nebraska-Lincoln national champion and current assistant track-field coach at College of Saint Mary, jumped 18 feet, 6 inches. The 46-year-old track and field standout would have set the record, but no wind gauge was present.

“This meet is pretty low-key,” Fey said. “I didn't expect any records to be



**Angee Henry soars to a winning leap of 18 feet, 6 inches in the long jump during the June 12 Jim McMahon Open Track Meet.**

“We were the inaugural winners of the Big 12 indoor meet,” she said. “Those are great memories.”

Henry competed in Europe before injuries caused her to switch to sprints, eventually choosing to compete in the 400 and 800 events. More injuries caused her to take a break, but she said she recovered enough to get back into the long jump.

Angee's husband of seven years is Todd Nott, longtime track and cross country coach at Plattsmouth High. She is in her first full season as College of Saint Mary assistant track coach.

Said Angee: “Derek asked me if I'd help him (coach), and I said, 'I'd love to.'”

CSM last winter opened a massive indoor track facility that Henry believes will be a boon for enticing area women athletes to the school on 72nd Street.

“I believe it's going to bring in recruits,” she said. “We need it for community use and open eyes to all the girls in the metro area.”

Henry is no stranger to CSM. It's where she received her teaching degree and, later, her master's. And now she's come full circle in hopes of a long stay at her alma mater.



# Peak's Run Happy Hour grows up



**The 2022 opening Run Happy Hour at Peak Performance drew around 200 participants. The runs take place Mondays on the Keystone Trail.**



**Mike Ewoldt addresses the large June 6 turnout.**

"We've got some things planned for the weeks ahead. On the downside, unfortunately, we can't get food trucks."

In addition to the assorted beverages — including those of the adult variety — snacks are offered. There will be games and, of course, music. The specialty adult drink is the margarita, made up of a "secret" recipe.

Invited to the June 6 event were Omaha Running Club Board members, headed by president Tom Whitaker and vice presi-

The Peak Performance Run Happy Hour events began at least 10 years ago, recalls Peak owner Mike Ewoldt. At the time, he wasn't aware that it would grow to become so popular.

"We've done this 10 to 12 years," Ewoldt said. "It started small with about 80 people. We didn't know if it was going to work out."

Judging by the turnout at this year's inaugural Run Happy Hour June 6, it's working out just fine. About 200 men, women and children took part in a run on the Keystone Trail before gathering in the parking lot behind Peak's 78th and Cass store.

"We're going to have a good summer," said Ewoldt, who started Peak with his brother in 1994.



**Participants are served refreshments and snacks following each Monday-night Run Happy Hour.**

dent Daren Konda. They gave a brief presentation on upcoming ORC races, including the Sept. 25 Heartland Marathon.

"We are looking forward to a great Heartland Marathon race this year as well as some of the other races," Whitaker said. "We have Peak 2 Peak coming this September and the Go Girl Run on Labor Day. In August, we have the Lake Wehrspann Run."

Konda thanked Peak for the invitation, noting what a great event Run Happy Hour has become. He then invited the attendees to enter ORC events.

A drawing of door prizes, courtesy of the Club, capped the evening's festivities.

## 2022 ORC Board Officers and Board Members

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For more on the ORC, go  
to: omaharun.org

Follow the Club on  
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# President's Message

I am starting my column this quarter on a sad note. Long-time runner and ORC volunteer James Richard "Dick" Burrows passed away on May 28. Dick was a Board member for a number of years and provided valuable support and counsel for our efforts. His family, at his memorial service, related that Dick was a bit tight with finances, as might be expected with five children to raise. But that appreciation of the value of money was so very helpful for the ORC Board during Dick's tenure when we operated on a shoestring most of the time.

Dick's running career was very admirable, having run each of the first 22 Omaha Marathons, two Boston Marathons and numerous road races throughout the U.S. Dick's community service also encompassed volunteering with the Omaha Public Library and various organizations throughout the community.



**Dick Burrows**

Dick was inducted into the ORC Hall of Fame in 2007 as a Competitor/Volunteer and his plaque reads: "Dick was one of the pioneers in the Omaha running movement and was a leader in the original Plains Track Club. A highly competitive runner, Dick completed each of the first 22 Omaha Marathons. Dick has also served many years as a director for the Omaha Running Club."

The ORC and the Omaha running community lost a great friend. Rest in peace, Dick, and thank you for your friendship and all you did to support the ORC and the Omaha running community.

We are planning our fall racing schedule, including Omaha's Heartland Marathon, Marathon Relay, Half Marathon and 10K



**Tom Whitaker**

that is set for its eighth presentation on Sept. 28. We plan to utilize the same courses as last year, all of which includes crossing the spectacular Bob Kerry Pedestrian Bridge, and provide runners with a unique prospective of our City of Omaha and the Midwest while at the same time providing an enjoyable running experience. The courses have been tentatively approved by both Omaha and Council Bluffs, and we hope that no changes will be required by road construction or by either municipality.

Our charities this year are the Omaha Police Foundation and the Council Bluffs Police Department. The OPD support is an integral part of the Omaha running scene, so we want to provide as much support as we can in recognition of all the

Police do, much like the Omaha Running Club, to support the local running community. And the Council Bluffs Department has been particularly helpful and flexible in planning routes in Iowa.

Please sign up today if you have not done so already for one of our Heartland Marathon events and help all of us support Omaha and Council Bluffs. Not only will you have a great run, you will be supporting great agencies and the non-profit Omaha Running Club in all we do all year for our local runners.

As you may have seen in the Omaha World Herald, the Sept. 18 Omaha Marathon has been canceled, and we just learned that the Nebraska Marathon that has been held in October the past couple years is moving to April 2023. That makes the Heartland the fall race to do in Omaha!

The ORC is planning to put on scheduled fall races with the ongoing hope that COVID-19 variations will continue to decline. That may all change, of course, as we see how COVID-19 finally progresses. At

*See President, Page 5*



## ORC presents another check to CB Police Dept.



ORC president Tom Whitaker and Vice President Daren Konda present a check for \$500 to Sgt. Josh Hughes and Sgt. Cory Woodward in recognition of Council Bluffs Police support for the Club's Heartland Marathon.

## President: Club is planning a full fall schedule of events

### *Continued from Page 4*

this writing, we will hold Lake Wehrspann Aug. 7 as planned as well as Peak 2 Peak Sept. 3 and Go Girl Run Sept. 5. The events may be a little different from the past if we have to create wave starts to observe distancing, eliminate open cups at aid stations and discourage congregating at the end of the race, just to name a few of the changes necessary to insure everyone's safety.

Still, we are planning on holding the best events in Omaha, and we look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to

participate and support your Club.

As you know, the Omaha Running Club is a volunteer organization with a mission to support the Omaha running and walking community. We do our best to try to support that mission to the extent that everyone's available personal resources permit. There are a number of national events these days that serve a purpose by putting on challenging and unique events, but they are not owned locally.

I would urge everyone to keep in mind that although these may be worthy

events, they come to town, utilize local resources and leave town with the proceeds.

Other than providing an event in which to participate, they do little to support our local community. Please keep our local events in mind as you plan your fall racing season.

My point with the foregoing is to emphasize that your support for your Club by running or volunteering for local events is important. Remember, any money raised stays right here in Omaha to support you, the local runner, the very reason for our existence.

# Weather ideal for McMahon Meet

By John Fey

Summer officially arrived June 21, and Mother Nature let us know it was time to crank up the air conditioning. Even before that date there were a few days where I got out of bed at 6 a.m. to see the thermometer read 82. That sure made for some toasty morning walks.

We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary at the end of June with a trip to wine country north of San Francisco. I got a kick out of the locals complaining how “hot” it was (mid-80s each day but lows in the 50s and very low humidity). I told them to visit Nebraska to discover what heat and humidity feels like.



When it comes to weather, July and August are my two least-favorite months. But two years ago, we started making a July trip to Granby, Colo., for a week at 7,000-foot elevation — and no humidity. Granby is just north of Winter Park, and sunsets are breathtaking. Mornings are crisp, perfect for walking, and I take full advantage of it. I found a circular route that takes me past the local golf course. The hills aren't killers but the altitude does come into play.

We're looking forward to a return trip to Colorado this month. It's really hard coming back home, but maybe Mother Nature will give us our June weather in July.

\* \* \*

What a great turnout for the fifth running of the Jim McMahon Open Track Meet at Westside High. It was a perfect day for competitors, and there were a bunch of them — from tykes to adults like former Nebraska track standout Angee Henry. As you'll notice in this issue, she competed in the McMahon event for the first time and really enjoyed herself. Soaring 18 feet, 6 inches, she showed she's still in excellent condition.

The meet, again under the direction of Derek Fey (my son), offered something for everyone — from field events to sprints to distances up to 5,000 meters. Age-group awards went to the top three in each event, patterned after the Olympics (gold, silver and bronze).

Derek came up with the idea of honoring McMahon, the late Midland College (now University) cross country and track coach. After Derek finished his running days at Westside, McMahon offered him a scholarship, but he instead opted to run cross country for Dana College.

The Omaha Running Club supports the McMahon meet by helping in various areas. President Tom Whitaker assisted with the high jump, and vice president Daren Konda and Tim Lens



**One of the younger competitors at the Jim McMahon Open Track Meet takes his turn at the long jump.**

helped out with the long-jump competition. I joined Mandy Kennedy and Jill Banaszak in handing out the awards. It appeared the competitors had an enjoyable time.

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Before we know it, the Heartland Marathon will be here. Last year, at long last, the event was blessed with favorable weather. With the (slight) easing of COVID-19 cases, the turnout was pleasing to race organizers. Here's hoping for a second straight year of nice conditions.

I was thrilled to read the World-Herald announcement that the Club took over ownership of the Omaha Marathon. And, as noted in the president's message in this issue, movement of the Nebraska Marathon to a spring date makes our event the best choice for a Midwest marathon experience. The course is about as flat as you can find — not to mention scenic with close views of the Missouri River.

One thing that continues to amaze me is the volunteer support for our marathon. Participants rave about it every year — as well they should. Without volunteers, the event simply could not be staged.

Volunteering for on-course assignments is a great way to get a close-up view of the runners while cheering them on. I think back to my four marathons (1983 and '84 Lincoln, '84 Omaha and 2002 Baltimore) and how much it meant to me for people giving words of encouragement, especially when I really needed it.

So I encourage you to either register for the Heartland or consider volunteering as much time as you can. You'll enjoy it.



# Distance clinic is a positive plus

As an avid runner, Hilary Catron wanted to do more to help others. So when she was asked by ORC officials earlier this year to head the Club's Distance Training Clinic, she eagerly answered the call. She assisted in years past.

"Last year with COVID it was too late in the year to get speakers organized," Catron said. "So we did four mini-sessions. We've always had Wednesday runs."

She leads a group ranging from five to 10 men and women. Catron is glad to give back.

"This is how I got my start into running," she said. "It's sentimental."

She participated in a training group when she chose to do her first half-marathon and found it beneficial.

"I had friends who were runners, and I would go watch," she said. "I'd see people cross the finish line and think, 'I can do that.' So I started running."

Catron found out about a yoga class held at Peak Performance. There she met Ken Juhl, and she began running with the group.

"I consider Ken my unofficial first coach," she said. "My goal was to run a sub-2 (hour) half. I actually ran faster than that."

She continued: "It's where I got my start. It was a really nice group with no pressure. You didn't have to be the fastest runner or the strongest runner. You just have to like to either run or walk and get outdoors. I found it was a really supportive, positive group."

While most in her training class have run longer races, she has one who is training for her first marathon, and she chose the Sept. 25 Heartland Marathon.

Born in Pennsylvania, Catron moved to Omaha 30 years ago. She started running just 10 years ago and has learned a lot over time.

"With running, you're going to have really good days and really bad days, but it doesn't matter," she said. "The next time you need to go run, you go run. Just because one is really good and one is really bad, it doesn't set the tone for how the next race is going to go or the next training run is going to go."

She added: "Sometimes it's nice to run with a group, and sometimes it's nice to run alone and start the day or end the day with a clear head. No matter what, you've accomplished something (by running)."

Catron relates her personal race experiences with the group.

"I raced a half-ironman in Des Moines last year, and the run really knocked me down," she said. "I could have chosen to not



**ORC's Wednesday training clinic, led by Hilary Catron, switched to run-only meetings at the end of June.**

finish or chosen to cross the finish line. In my head I was thinking, 'What story do I want to tell people tomorrow?' It was tough, but I crossed the finish line. I didn't want to say I just quit at mile 6 because it was too hard."

She added: "I think that carries over to other places in life."

Catron said it'll be gratifying to see her trainees accomplish their goals once the clinic ends.

"It'll be the greatest feeling," she said. "I consider them my Omaha running family. Whenever you have that kind of support from other people and see them succeed, it's just awesome and motivating. We've all known what it feels like to do that first (race), and you're so excited for somebody who's your friend to have that feeling, too."

She continued: "You're almost a little selfish. You want them to know that feeling so bad."

Catron is planning a race right before Heartland, but she'll be there cheering on those from her clinic who will be entered.

"Sometimes everybody needs a little push," she said. "Finishing is such a great feeling, and that's why I like this group. You know they're going to be there to support you back."

Though the clinic began last month, it's not too late to sign up. The good news: It's free to ORC members. At the end of June, the clinic switched from guest speaker to runs only each Wednesday.

"Everybody is just super nice and friendly," Catron said. "It's a fun place to be and a fun group of people. It's the best of both worlds. We have all speeds and all paces."

For more information on the Distance Training Clinic, click on this link: [omaharun.org/distance-clinic](http://omaharun.org/distance-clinic).

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# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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